



A HISTORY
OF
THE PAPACY
DURING
THE PERIOD OF THE REFORMATION

BY
M. CREIGHTON, M.A.

DIXIE PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
AND CANON RESIDENTIARY OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL : LL.D. OF GLASGOW
AND HARVARD : D.C.L. OF DURHAM ; FELLOW OF THE
SOCIETÀ ROMANA DI STORIA PATRIA

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CHAPTER I.

PAUL II.

1464-1471.

So long as the struggle against the conciliar movement continued, the objects of the papal policy were determined; it was only when the papal restoration had been practically achieved that the difficulties of the Papal position became apparent. Nearly a hundred years had passed since there was an undoubted Pope who had his hands free for action of his own; and in those hundred years the central idea on which the Papacy rested—the idea of a Christian Commonwealth of Europe—had crumbled silently away. A dim consciousness of decay urged Pius II. to attempt to give fresh life to the idea before it was too late. The expulsion of the Turks from Europe was clearly an object worthy of united effort, and the old associations of a Crusade would set up the Papacy once more as supreme over the international relations of Europe. But Pius II.'s well-meant effort for a Crusade was a total failure, and only his death prevented the failure from being ludicrous. He left unsolved the difficult problem, In what shape was the Papacy to enter into the new political system which was slowly replacing that of the Middle Ages? A still more difficult problem, as yet scarcely suspected, lay behind, How was the ecclesiastical system which the Middle Ages had forged to meet the spirit of criticism which the New Learning had already called into vigorous life.

CHAP.
I.

Some sense of these problems was present to Pius II. as he lay upon his deathbed; but few of the Cardinals were so farseeing. Pius II.'s corpse was brought to Rome, and his obsequies were performed with befitting splendour. Then on August 24 the

Conclave
of Paul II.
August
24-30,
1464.

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twenty Cardinals who were in Rome entered the Conclave in the Vatican. The first day was spent in preliminaries. On the second day the electors, before proceeding to the election of an absolute monarch, attempted to impose on him constitutional restraints. They framed a series of regulations which each swore that he would observe in case he were elected. These regulations began with an undertaking to continue the war against the Turks, and summon a General Council within three years for the purpose of stirring up princes to greater enthusiasm for the faith. But this was only the formal prelude to promises which more nearly affected the interests of the College. The future Pope undertook to limit the number of Cardinals to twenty-four, who were to be created only after a public vote in a Consistory. None were to be created who were not of the age of thirty at least, graduates in law or theology, and not more than one relative of the Pope was to be amongst them. The Cardinals were to be consulted on appointments to the more important posts, and the wills of members of the Curia were to be respected on their death. As a guarantee for the observance of this agreement a clause was added empowering the Cardinals to meet twice a year and consider if it had been duly regarded; if not, they were to admonish the Pope, 'with the charity of sons towards a father,' of his forgetfulness and transgression.

Election of
Cardinal
Barbo,
August 30.

When this agreement had been drafted and signed by all, the Cardinals proceeded to a scrutiny. The majority seem to have made up their minds, for the first voting showed twelve votes in favour of Pietro Barbo, Cardinal of S. Marco. As soon as this was announced four Cardinals at the same moment declared their accession, and then to make the election unanimous Bessarion asked each separately if they agreed. Cardinal Barbo was elected with a unanimity and a rapidity which were of rare occurrence in the annals of papal elections. Only the old Scarampo was opposed to one against whom he had a long-standing grudge, for Barbo had consistently opposed his influence over Eugenius IV.

Early life
of Paul II.

Pietro Barbo was a nephew of Eugenius IV., by whom he had been made Cardinal. He was a man of handsome appearance, naturally suave and courteous, with all a Venetian's love of splendour. He learned in the Curia how to use his natural

gifts to good purpose. He could easily ingratiate himself into the favour of his superiors, and was a favourite of Nicolas V. and Calixtus III. To the keen-sighted Pius II. his supple manners were not so acceptable, and he did not so readily have his wishes satisfied. Yet he was an incorrigible beggar, and had recourse even to tears if entreaties failed, so that Pius II. laughed at him and gave him the name of 'Maria pientissima.' But the complacency of Barbo was not confined to his superiors. He was fond of popularity and was genuinely kindly. He never abandoned the cause of any whom he took under his protection. He visited members of the Curia when they were sick, tended them carefully, and supplied them with unguents and medicines which he obtained from Venice. His enemies attributed his kindness to interested motives, and accused him of hunting legacies;¹ but this could not be the reason of his affability to the Roman citizens, whom he delighted to entertain with refined magnificence. His first act in the Conclave after his election showed that his natural impulse was towards considerate courtesy. He advanced to embrace his old enemy Scarampo, who was so crippled with gout that he could not leave his chair: seeing a crestfallen look upon his face he consoled him and bade him be of good cheer, assuring him that the past was forgotten.

To his personal popularity and his supposed sympathy with the objects of the Cardinal College, Barbo chiefly owed his election, though the political cause which brought him into prominence was the alliance with Venice against the Turks which Pius II. bequeathed to the Papacy. Barbo was in the prime of life, of the age of forty-eight; when asked what name he would bear as Pope, he said 'Formosus.' The Cardinals were afraid that this would be interpreted as his own estimate of his handsome appearance. At their request he chose another name; but his next choice of Mark did not please them better, for it was the Venetian war cry. Finally he took the title of Paul II., and was consecrated on September 16.

The Cardinals, who had counted on the complaisance of the new Pope, soon found themselves mistaken. In spite of his promises Paul II. intended to be as absolute as his predecessors.

Paul II.
and his
Cardinals.

¹ So says Platina, who never fails to drop ill-natured hints about Paul II.

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He had signed the agreement drawn up in the Conclave with the remark that, even if its provisions had not been drafted, he would have observed them for their intrinsic usefulness. But his first act as Pope was to set aside this compact. He drew up another of his own, which he said was better, but which was full of ambiguities. He summoned the Cardinals one by one into his chamber and requested them to sign his draft as preferable to their own. When they remonstrated he overwhelmed them with reproaches; when they wished to read the document and discuss its contents, he covered it with his hand and bade them sign. When Bessarion refused and tried to escape, the Pope seized him, dragged him back, locked the door, and threatened him with excommunication if he did not immediately obey. Dismayed and overborne the Cardinals one by one complied, except the brave and upright Carvajal, who said, 'I will not do in my old age what I never did as a youth. I will not repent of my integrity; but I will bear you no grudge.' When Paul II. had extorted all the signatures except that of Carvajal, he flung his document into a chest and locked it up; the Cardinals were not allowed even to have a copy of the amended regulations which the Pope consented to observe. It was a bitter disappointment to them. Under Nicolas V., Calixtus III., and Pius II. the College had not been able to mould the papal policy. Under Paul II. it hoped for a return to power; but the Pope burst its bonds as a lion breaks through a net. The Cardinals were downcast; but at last a dim consciousness that probably each of them would have behaved in a like manner found expression in a joke which the Cardinal of Avignon made to the Pope: 'You have made good use of your twenty-four years' study of the College to deceive us once.'¹

We cannot blame the conduct of Paul II. in this matter. The attempt to bind the Pope was a legacy of the Schism, and rested upon the principles laid down by the conciliar movement. But it had appeared earlier than the Schism, and was distinctly forbidden by a Constitution of Innocent VI. in 1353.²

¹ These details are taken from two very frank letters of Cardinal Ammannati, one to the Pope, the other to the Cardinal of Teano; *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolæ*, 181, 182.

² Raynaldus, *Annales*, 1353, § 29.

It was natural that the electors to the Papacy should try to secure their own interests; but such a proceeding was entirely contrary to the canonical conception of the plenitude of the papal power. The method adopted of signing a joint agreement was singularly unfortunate. To refuse to sign would have meant exclusion from office: to fulfil the agreement after election would have been an unlawful diminution of his authority, which the new Pope was bound to maintain and hand down intact.

But though Paul II. did not intend to increase the power of the Cardinals, he had no objection to increase their grandeur. He reserved to the Cardinals the privilege of wearing red hats, and allowed them to use purple cloaks and trappings for their horses, which had been formerly reserved for the Pope; he gave them also raised seats in consistories and in churches. Moreover, he made a monthly allowance of 100 gold florins to Cardinals whose yearly revenues were below 4,000 florins, and he showed a like liberality to poor Bishops. All this was part of his policy to make his pontificate remarkable by personal splendour. If Nicolas V. aimed at making Rome the literary and artistic capital of Christendom, Paul II. aimed at making the grandeur of the papal court a model to the princes of Europe. He loved magnificence, and claimed it as a special prerogative of the Papacy. He delighted to walk in procession, where his tall figure overtopped all others; his dignity and impressiveness in celebrating the mass enchanted even his assistants in the ceremony. His love of ornaments was shown by his revival of the use of the *Regnum* or triple crown, first worn by Urban V., but since abandoned;¹ he had one made studded with jewels valued at 120,000 ducats. 'When he appeared in public it was,' says Platina, 'like another Aaron, with form more august than man.'²

Paul II. was a zealous collector of cameos and medals, and a lucky opportunity soon threw in his way a means of acquiring

¹ *Papiensis Commentarii*, p. 371. 'Mitram, quæ tribus educta coronis Regnum appellatur, atque a Pontificibus multis ante sæculis desita erat gestari, novam confecit atque adhibuit.'

² Platina maliciously adds that he painted his face. 'Fuere qui dicerent eum dum in publicum prodiret, faciem sibi fucis concinnare;' but as even Platina only gives it as a rumour, we may fairly reject it as a calumny.

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Death of
Cardinal
Scarampo.
March
1465.

a large collection. Cardinal Scarampo died in March 1465, and by his will left all his possessions to two nephews, who were by no means fit persons to enjoy the vast treasures which Scarampo had amassed at the expense of the Church. He was suspected of having appropriated the wealth of Eugenius IV., and when he carried his enmity against Paul II. so far as to make no restitution to the Church at his death, everyone thought that the Pope was amply justified in setting aside his will, and seizing his goods. Men even wondered at Paul II.'s clemency towards Scarampo's nephews; when they attempted to flee with some of their uncle's treasures they were only imprisoned for a few days, and Paul II. made them a handsome allowance out of the money which he received.

Apathy
about a
Crusade.

Paul II. was not a practised politician like Pius II.; he was averse from war, as was natural in one who loved the splendours of peace. He had no desire to meddle unnecessarily with the affairs of Europe, and the results of the journey to Ancona were not encouraging for a continuance of crusading schemes. Still Paul II. sent subsidies to Mathias of Hungary, and declared himself ready to contribute 100,000 ducats for the purpose of a crusade if other powers would contribute in proportion. But Europe was apathetic: North Italy was disturbed by the death of Cosimo de' Medici, and the Venetians hung back. Nothing was done, and the Turks continued to advance steadily, checked only by the brave resistance of Scanderbeg in Albania:

Paul II.
and the
reform of
the Church.

Perhaps Paul II. was not sorry to find that no heroic measures were expected from him. His interests lay in the arts of peace, and he took a large view of the obligations of the work that lay immediately at his doors. For a time, at the beginning of his pontificate, he seems to have seriously contemplated a reform of some of the worst abuses of the papal system. He consulted a Consistory about the desirability of abandoning grants of benefices in expectancy. Different opinions were given, but that of Carvajal prevailed. He said that the Papacy had laboured long to break down the opposition of ordinaries to papal provisions; now that the prerogative had been established, it would be dangerous to let it fall into abeyance.¹ It was an argument unfortunately only

¹ Cardinalis Papiensis *Epistolæ*, 92.

too plausible at all times. Abuses soon pass into rights, and the technical mind deprecates the surrender of claims which it cannot undertake to defend. Paul II. did not venture to decree the abolition of grants in expectancy; but for his own part he declined to make such grants. Though he loved magnificence, he was too high-minded to resort to unworthy means for raising money. He did his utmost to put down simony and repress the sale of indulgences,¹ and his efforts to check abuses were sincere. It is a sign how deeply rooted these abuses were that one so strong as Paul II. should have hesitated to go further than bequeath to his successors a fruitless example of personal purity.

In matters concerning the Church at large Paul II. might be guided by the opinion of his Cardinals, but in reforming the Curia he followed his own judgment. The army of officials, who composed the administrative staff of the papal court, were divided into several departments, chief of which was the Chancery, presided over by a Cardinal who took the title of Vice-Chancellor. The Chancery preserved the papal archives, and conducted the papal correspondence. For this last purpose there were two sets of officials, the papal secretaries and the abbreviators. Since the reorganisation of the Curia by Martin V. it had been recognised that the secretaries stood in confidential relations towards the Pope, and their office frequently ended with the death of their patron. The abbreviators who were not concerned with the private correspondence of the Pope, but only prepared formal documents, held office for life, and were appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.² The lucrative post of Vice-Chancellor had been bestowed by Calixtus III. on his nephew Cardinal Borgia. Pius II. had no friendly feelings towards Borgia, and liked to exercise patronage himself. Accordingly he formed the abbreviators into a College, fixed their number at seventy, and limited the nominations of the Vice-Chancellor to twelve.³ He filled the College so constituted with

Paul II.
abolishes
the College
of Abbreviators,
December
1464.

¹ Filelfo to Sixtus IV., *Ep.* bk. xxiii. : 'Indulgentias item ipsas temporum necessitate concessas, quoniam lucrativæ viderentur, magna ex parte abrogavit. Quæ vero vel gratiæ vel expectativæ appellantur, ex quibus ipsis grandes thesauri conflantur, eas quam inhibuerit, omnes sciunt.'

² Ciampini, *De Abbreviatorum Antiquo Statu*. Rome, 1691, p. 23-34.

³ See Voigt, *Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini*, iii. 552 &c.

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V.

favourites of his own, Sienese friends and literary dependents. Paul II., probably with justice, regarded the abbreviators as the source of much corruption and venality; perhaps he was not sorry to rid himself of the Sienese element which Pius II. had so largely introduced into the Curia. He abolished the arrangements of Pius II., ejected his nominees from their posts, and did away with the order of abbreviators altogether. This again was a barren attempt at reform. Sixtus IV. restored the College, and Innocent VIII. increased it that he might make money out of the sale of offices.

Wrath of
abbrevi-
ators.

No step is more unpopular than one of administrative reform, and Paul II.'s reputation has suffered in consequence. Great was the dismay, bitter the indignation, and loud the cries of the dispossessed officials. Many of them were scholars and men of letters, and according to the temper of their class considered that they conferred more distinction on the Curia than they received from it. The Pope's action was resented as an insult to the entire literary fraternity, and the abbreviators were at first sure that if they raised their complaints the Pope would be forced by public opinion to give way. Moreover, as the office of abbreviator was frequently bought by candidates, they put in a legal claim to its possession as a freehold for life. Platina, the most distinguished of their number, urged their cause with warmth, and demanded that their claims should be submitted to the legal decision of the auditors of the Rota. He little knew the resoluteness of the Pope. Paul II. looked at him with a scowl; 'Do you talk of bringing us before judges, as if you did not know that all law is seated in our breast? If you talk in that way, all shall be dismissed. I care not; I am Pope, and can at my good pleasure rescind or confirm the acts of others.' Platina found Paul II. as immovable as a rock, and when remonstrance failed he determined to have recourse to threats. He wrote a haughty letter to the Pope, saying that if he persisted in depriving the abbreviators of their legal rights, they would complain to the princes of Europe and entreat them to summon a Council which would call the Pope to account for his illegal conduct. It is a striking testimony to the power of the revived literature of Italy that such a threat should have been conveyed to such a Pope. The humanists must indeed have had a high sense of their own im-

portance before they could dream of disturbing the peace of Europe by a question concerning their position in the papal court.

CHAP.
I.

The answer of Paul II. was quick and decided. He ordered Platina to be put in prison on a charge of treason. In vain Platina justified his action by reference to the censorial power in the Roman Republic; for four months he lay in his cell, bound by heavy chains, without a fire in the wintry weather. He was at length released through the entreaties of Cardinal Gonzaga, who warned him not to leave Rome, but to stay there quietly. 'If you were to go to India,' he added, 'Paul would find means to bring you back.' Platina was humbled, and on his release from prison lived quietly in Rome, till he again excited the Pope's anger and suffered still worse treatment at his hands.

Imprison-
ment of
Platina.

With equal decision Paul II. applied himself to the practical details of the government of Rome. He inquired into the prices of provisions, and when the corn merchants pleaded scarcity as a reason for their high charges, the Pope sent envoys of his own to procure corn and meat for the Roman market. So successful was he in this undertaking that prices fell more than a half. While he thus provided for the comfort of the people, he sternly repressed disorder and demanded obedience to the laws. He had a horror of violence and wished all men to live in peace. In carrying out his measures he showed a happy mixture of firmness and mercy. Turbulent spirits were cooled by a few days' imprisonment; no malefactors were allowed to escape; but Paul II. was averse from severity, and above all from bloodshed. Though willing to remit the full penalty inflicted on smaller crimes, his sense of justice would not allow him to pardon homicide, while his clemency shrank from the infliction of capital punishment. The prisons were filled with culprits, and the magistrates clamoured for their execution. 'Do you think it a small thing,' said the Pope, 'to put to death a man, so admirable a piece of God's workmanship, and moulded for use by human society through so many years of toil?' He devised a new punishment for grave offenders by sending them to serve in his galleys, with strict orders to the captains that they should be mercifully treated. Compassion was inherent in the tempera-

Paul II. as
ruler of
Rome.

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V.The Roman
Carnival.

ment of Paul II. He rescued birds from their captors and let them go free. He could not even endure to see a bullock being led to the shambles, but would stop and buy it from the butcher that its life might be spared.¹

In other matters which affected the well-being of the city, Paul II. showed equal sagacity. He cleansed the sewers and aqueducts, and repaired the bridges over the Tiber. He preferred to take part in the city life rather than enjoy the somewhat solitary grandeur of the Vatican. He lived chiefly in the Palazzo of S. Marco, which he had built as Cardinal, and which still stands as a memorial of his architectural taste. From its windows he could enjoy the sight of the Roman Carnival which he delighted to organise and encourage. There were races of all kinds in the long straight street which led to his palace, and which took from his day the well-known name of the Corso. All classes and all ages might enjoy themselves; there were foot races for the Jews, for youths, for adults and for old men. There were horse races, donkey races, and races for buffaloes. There were pageants of giants and cupids, Diana and her nymphs, Bacchus and his attendant fauns; there were processions of civic magistrates escorted by waggons laden with grotesque figures, while songs in honour of the Pope resounded on all sides. On the last day of the Carnival, Paul II. gave a magnificent banquet to the magistrates. The remnants, including all the furniture of the table, were distributed amongst the people, and the Pope himself threw small silver coins to be scrambled for by the crowd. Some shook their heads at these heathenish vanities as unbecoming a Pope;² but Paul II., while desirous to check abuses, had none of the spirit of asceticism, though he himself was most temperate in his pleasures, and seldom took more than one meal a day, and that a simple one. He possessed, however, the spirit of genuine charity, and besides showing liberality in cases of conspicuous need, chose almoners, men and women of high character, whom he supplied with money, which they expended secretly in the relief of the destitute.

¹ Canesius in Quirini, p. 40.

² Papiensis *Epistole*, 282: 'Æmulator vanitatis antiquæ sæculares ludos et epulum populo Romano exhibes. . . Veram laudem ista non habent. Sacerdotalis non putantur officii.'

CHAP.
I.Paul II.
recovers
the Patri-
mony.
1465.

In the States of the Church Paul II. did what he could to stop administrative corruption. He forbade the governors of cities to receive presents, except of provisions, and of these not more than a supply for two days. He gave the castles into the hands of prelates, thinking that they were more trustworthy than the neighbouring barons. Moreover he was enabled to take an important step towards securing the peace of Rome, which since the days of Eugenius IV. had been disturbed by the turbulent baron Everso, Count of Anguillara, who was little better than a bandit, and made the approaches to Rome dangerous by the robber hordes whom he encouraged. He held his power by virtue of opposition to the Popes; he intrigued with the discontented in Rome and kept the city in constant disquiet. At his death, in September, 1464, he was master of most of the towns in the Patrimony. Paul II. resolved to recover the possessions of the Church from the two sons of Everso who promised to restore the castles which their father had seized. The promise was not kept, and in June 1465 Paul II. sent his troops against them. There was a party in Rome which was in their favour, a party which wished to maintain any sort of check on the power of the Pope. Paul II. acted with the wisdom of a statesman. He summoned an assembly of the Roman people, and plainly put before them his policy and his aims.¹ The opposition was at once overborne, and Rome was united in desiring to be rid of a horde of robbers at its gates.² Not a blow was struck in behalf of Everso's sons: one fled to Venice, the other was made prisoner. Thirteen castles were at once surrendered to the Church, and by the end of 1465 Paul II. was master of the Patrimony. Towards the general politics of Italy the attitude of Paul II. was at once wise and dignified. He studied above all things to maintain peace, and refused to join in any of the leagues, or countenance any of the plans, which the Italian States were so fertile in forming against their neighbours. He would not offend anyone, but he would seek no one's favour. He had no objects of his own to pursue, but aimed at holding an independent position as arbiter amongst conflicting interests.

In the external relations of the Papacy Pius II. had left

¹ Canesius in Quirini, 56, &c., gives the Pope's speech.

² Ammannati *Epistola*, 121, expresses the general feeling of the Romans.

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and Bo-
hemia.

one important question for settlement, and when the need for action was clearly apparent Paul II. could act with a resolution unknown to his predecessor. The last thing that Pius II. had done before departing for Ancona was to summon to Rome the heretical King of Bohemia, George Podiebrad. It was reserved to Paul II. to bring to an end the Bohemian difficulty, and the fact that he entertained no political projects of his own enabled him to concentrate his attention on the purely ecclesiastical side of George Podiebrad's position. We have seen how George of Bohemia strove to emerge from the isolation in which as a Utraquist he stood amongst the powers of Europe. He tried every means, and even threatened to break down the hierarchical basis of the state system of Europe. First he endeavoured to win the Imperial crown, and failing that, to reform the Empire according to his ideas; finally he set on foot a scheme for a new organisation of international affairs, by means of a parliament of European princes. This last attempt had warned the Papacy of its danger, and Pius II. resolved to crush George by every means in his power. The death of Pius II. suspended for a time the process against George which the Pope had threatened. George had a short period of respite while Paul II. paused to survey the ground.

Difficulties
of King
George.

Though George Podiebrad had done great things in restoring order into Bohemia and raising its credit abroad, he was still no nearer to a permanent settlement than he was at the beginning of his reign. The Catholics of Breslau refused to recognise him as their king, and were under the protection of the Pope. Bohemia was still distracted, and the key to the papal policy was to be found in the saying of the Archbishop of Crete to the complaint of the men of Breslau, that not the Rhine, the Danube, and the Tiber could quench the flame of heresy in Bohemia. 'The Moldau alone will suffice,' was his answer. In truth, the Bohemian nobles looked with some suspicion on the king who had risen from their own ranks, and whose efforts were directed to increase the kingly power. They were gradually becoming more discontented; and though they would not venture to take up arms simply at the Pope's bidding, for the large majority of the people was Utraquist, they were ready to seek a political pretext which might bring them into alliance with the Pope. Early in 1465 a baron who had been

always hostile to King George, Hynek of Lichtenberg, rose against the King, and the States of Moravia declared war against him as a disturber of the peace. His castle of Zornstein was besieged, whereupon Hynek fled to Rome and besought the Pope to take cognisance of his case. The Bishop of Lavant, who had been appointed legate for Bohemian affairs in Germany, wrote from Rome, forbidding all Catholics in Moravia and Bohemia to continue the siege of Zornstein; Hynek, as being a good Catholic, was under the protection of the Pope.

CHAP.

I.

King George now knew what he had to expect from the new Pope. He wrote to Paul II. assuring him that Hynek was not persecuted on account of his faith, but was being punished for his rebellious conduct. The Bishop of Lavant from Neustadt threatened with interdict all who took part in the siege of Zornstein. Paul II. answered George's letter, not to himself, but to the Bohemian States, saying that he was sorry to hear charges against an orthodox man like Hynek; as he who ordered proceedings to be taken against Hynek had no power and authority, since he refused obedience to the Church, the Pope declared Hynek to be no rebel, and repeated his orders that the siege of Zornstein should be raised. Of course the Papal letter did not carry conviction, and Zornstein fell before its besiegers in June 1465.

The letter of Paul II. was meant to be a declaration of war; by his defence of Hynek he showed the means by which he intended to wage it, and invited allies. He did not act without knowledge; by his side stood the stubborn Carvajal, who since the days of Eugenius IV. had directed the papal diplomacy in Germany and Bohemia. George was not long in feeling the results of this policy. The discontented barons, who dreaded the steady growth of the royal power, gathered together secretly and formed themselves into a League under the guidance of Bishop Jost of Breslau. At the head of these nobles stood Zdenek of Sternberg, once the firm friend of King George, but who had gradually been estranged from him. It was agreed that the religious question was to be carefully excluded from their complaints, and that their action was to be founded on the grounds of national patriotism. A list of grievances was drawn up and presented to the King in a Diet

League
against
George.
November
1465.

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